



# Playgrounds

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sources <http://angermann2.com/images/>

## WHY PLAY?

Play helps a child become a fully functioning person by integrating all aspects of development.

Play enhances cognitive, affective and psychomotor development.

Cognitive- language, symbolism, mathematical relationships and scientific principles.

Affective-social skills, experiencing emotions and handling strong feelings (such as anger).

Psychomotor-large and small motor development and coordination.



sources <http://www.standards.dfes.>

Playgrounds not only serve the needs of children (above) they can also serve the greater needs for urban communities to access open space and facilitate urban ecological systems.

*If used creatively playgrounds can serve as part of the system for the following urban functions.*

Urban sustainability.

City Livability.

Social equity.

Environmental responsibility.

Environmental education and stewardship.

Habitat creation and restoration .

Storm water management and filtration

Low energy use or energy contributors.

Community development & involvement.

Greening the city.

Density promotion.

Children are the foundation of the world's future.

Children have played at all times in throughout history in all cultures.

Play along with the basic needs of nutrition, health, shelter and education, is vital to develop the potential of all children.

[Source: IPA Declaration of the Child's Right to Play, Brett.]

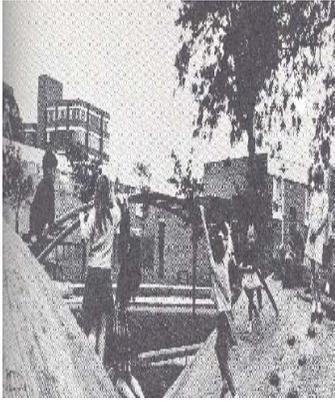


image source: "A playground for all Children."



image source: [http://www.antulov.com/north\\_](http://www.antulov.com/north_)



image source: "[http://www.secession.at/presse/regierung/friedl\\_playgrounds.jpg](http://www.secession.at/presse/regierung/friedl_playgrounds.jpg)"



image source: "A playground for all Children."

***"Ideally a child's play space should never be finished, it should be in a constant state of change," says Susan Goltsman, a principal in the Berkeley, California, based firm Moore Iacofano Goltsman, who planned and designed the play space. "Children, you know, have a way of creating their own worlds."*** -From *Kids Don't Need Equipment, They Need Opportunity*, By Ellen Ruppell Shell, Smithsonian Magazine, 1994.

## ***Playgrounds-Critical elements***

**Safety**-engage in constructive and responsible risk taking.

**Versatile**-for children at different stages of development.

**Equipment, Design features and a variety of settings** –this allows it to be used in different ways depending upon the interests and imagination of children.

**Physically modifiable elements.**

**Meet the individual needs** of children with exception needs.

**Provide places for adults.**

**Facilitate social interaction**-peers and intergenerational.

**Aesthetically pleasing.**

## **Playground Types**

***Traditional***

***American playgrounds***

***School Yards***

***Adventure Playgrounds***

***Open playgrounds-democratic***

***Playparks***

***Play streets***

***Temporal playgrounds***

***Sensory playgrounds***

***Waterparks***

***Urban Farms***

(Types highlighted in red are the focus of this report).

**“Does a vacant lot or waterfront dump look like a playground or park to you? If so, go get it!” -Project for Public Spaces.**

**Acquisition**

**Transfer of Development Rights** - Through Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) communities can preserve open space by selling developments rights so that another site can be built at higher density. Sites that sell rights are called “sending sites” and sites that purchase them are called “receiving sites.”

**Levies and Bond Issues** - Citizens can vote to tax themselves to fund parks. An example in Seattle is the Pro Parks Levy.

**Developer fees** - Higher density development can be offered in exchange for park development funds which can be applied to a variety of projects including play areas. Vancouver assesses fees called Community Amenity Contributions when zoning changes are granted.

**Other** - The Project for Public Spaces provides information on many funding sources from user fees and taxes to public/private partnerships and taxable bonds ([http://www.pps.org/upo/info/funding/?referrer=upo\\_contents](http://www.pps.org/upo/info/funding/?referrer=upo_contents)).

**Implementation Mechanisms**

**Partnerships and Collaborations** - Linking play areas with schools and community centers allows more efficient distribution of funds and greater potential to hire staff. Play areas can be implemented through public agencies, nonprofits and volunteers or a combinations thereof. Project for Public Spaces details several possibilities ([http://www.pps.org/upo/info/management/?referrer=upotopics\\_contents](http://www.pps.org/upo/info/management/?referrer=upotopics_contents)).

Cities can also draw up maintenance agreements in which the city provides resources for citizens to perform park services. An example in Seattle is the traffic circle garden program.

“Many architects and designers think of playgrounds as a necessary evil, something to tack on reluctantly, budget permitting, after the real work of creating buildings is done. This helps to explain why so many inner-city housing developments offer so little for children—typically a trio of swings set in four globs of cement adrift in an asphalt sea. Usually the swings have no seats. Often the asphalt is strewn with broken glass. The thinking, or lack of it, that led to this tragedy is changing, but slowly and sporadically. And while theorists argue and government agencies equivocate about what to do, a handful of activists are slipping bits and pieces of childhood back into the inner city.”

-Ellen Ruppell Shell, Smithsonian Magazine, 1994.

**Pattern: Connected Play, Connected Nature**

**68 Connected Play**

Lay out common land, paths, gardens, and bridges so that groups of at least 64 households are connected by a swath of land that does not cross traffic. Establish this land as the connected play space for the children in these households.

**73 Adventure Playground**

Set up a playground for the children in each neighbourhood. Not a highly finished playground, with asphalt and swings, but a place with raw materials of all kinds—nets, boxes, barrels, trees, ropes, simple tools, frames, grass, and water— where children can create and re-create playgrounds of their own.

-From Christopher Alexander’s *A Pattern Language*

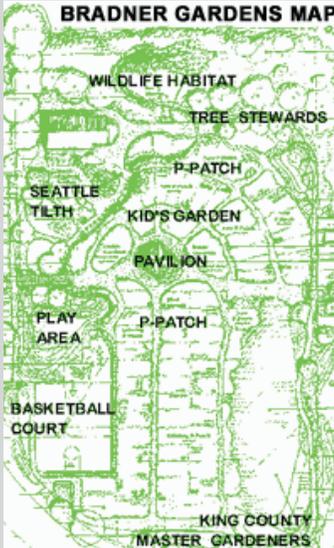
It is important that play spaces be linked together to take best advantage of resources. Start where children already go. Schoolyards can be combined with community centers to make community parks that can then allow all day supervision for sports, adventure play, urban farm or craft activities. These spaces can be linked with ecological infrastructure such as storing rainwater to maintain a garden that 1) can be a great educational tool and 2) generate a constituency that will care for it.



Play space should take advantage of multiple resources, border and serve multiple entities, be used in multiple ways and be connected to a larger ecological network.



SOURCE: <http://www.mountbaker.org/dir/info/bradner.htm>



SOURCE: <http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/parks/park-spaces/bradnergardens.htm>

## “Bradner Garden’s Park is a jewel in Seattle City Park’s crown”

<http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/light/Green/greenPower/Accomplishments/bradner.asp>

### BRADNER GARDENS PARK

Location: 29th Avenue South and South Grand Street, Seattle, WA 98144

This case study site integrates children’s play with adult spaces and urban agricultural processes. The Dutch, British and Germans have been leaders in this movement for several decades. This is a particularly playful version of a children’s farm, which integrates the community process so familiar in Seattle designs. The expert groups involved in this Park advise, educate and stimulate interest in natural, native, urban and open space processes with Children and community groups.

Features included are

- Seven ornamental theme gardens of the Master Gardener border: butterfly & hummingbird, fragrance, sensory, shade, xeriscape, winter interest northwest native.
- 61 p-patch plots.
- Children’s A to Z garden.
- Learn how to grow food crops in the Seattle Tilth and Urban Food demonstration gardens.
- Watch birds take shelter in the native plant habitat.
- See more than 50 varieties of ornamental street trees recommended for small spaces.
- Play basketball on the renovated court that has one regulation hoop and one adjustable hoop.
- 33-foot-tall vintage (1916 to 1933) Aermotor windmill that circulates water from the sea-sonal pond to the dry streambed next to the children’s play area.
- Integrated art throughout the garden.



Source: <http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/parks/parkspaces/carkeek-park/elc.htm>



image source: <http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/parks/park-spaces/carkeekpark/elc.htm>

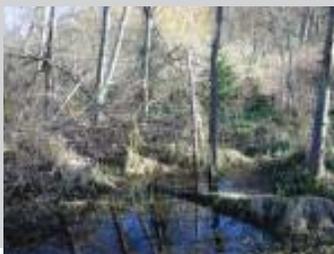


Image SOURCE: [http://timloyd.org/photos/slideshow.php?set\\_albumName=carkeek-park](http://timloyd.org/photos/slideshow.php?set_albumName=carkeek-park)

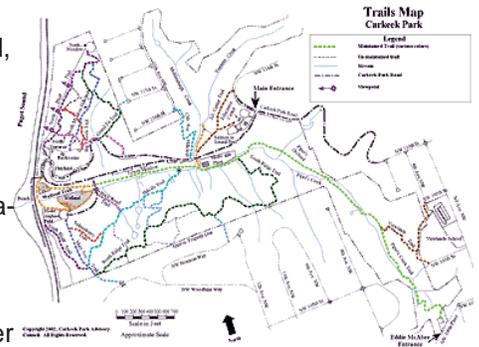
## “Conservation begins at home”

Nancy Malmgren, community activist

### CARKEEK PARK

Location: 950 Northwest Carkeek Park Road, Seattle, WA 98177

This park’s 216 acres has a salmon creek, a wetlands walk, beach access and an innovative playspace for children, hiking trails and expansive views of mountains and water, which accommodate bird watching. The Carkeek Park Environmental Learning Center (ELC) was built to provide space for environmental education and stewardship activities and to create additional community gathering/meeting space.



Features includes are

- The children’s play area features a giant salmon slide.
- Kids can climb over concrete “tide pools” imbedded with tile “sea creatures”.
- The wetlands walk, located close to the beach access, offers a short boardwalk through still, dark water full of ducks and other birds.
- Places to pause and observe the area.
- A trail passes through native plantings to the creek.
- During the salmon run, Piper’s Creek is alive with salmon returning to their spawning grounds.
- Naturalists stay on hand to give out information, and the park celebrates the return of the salmon with nature programs and events.
- The environmental learning center has a water collection and filtration system.

***“People typically envision an elementary school surrounded by concrete and asphalt playgrounds and parking lots. Our campus parks program grew out of the unconventional idea that we can surround our schools with green, open spaces filled with grass, trees and flowers,”*** -Mayor Daley.

<http://www.cps.k12.il.us/>

## CHICAGO SCHOOL DISTRICT: Campus Parks Program

In early 1997, the City of Chicago created what is now referred to as the Campus Park Program. To date, some 100 schools and their surrounding neighborhoods have benefited from this program. The Campus Park program consists of a partnership between the Chicago Public Schools, the City of Chicago and the Chicago Park District working together to transform underused and neglected land surrounding schools into landscaped playgrounds, gardens and recreation areas to serve the schools and neighboring communities. Schools are considered for the Campus Park program based on four criteria: Need, Opportunity, Partnerships and Commitment.

### Features & Concept intent

- Campus parks provide a safe area for children to spend their time and participate in activities during and after school.
- Improved learning environment at schools.
- Increases green space amenities in neighborhoods surrounding schools.
- Improves quality of life in neighborhood and at school

## ADVENTURE PLAYGROUNDS: Kolle 37

A significant principle of Adventure playgrounds is the opportunity for children to manipulate their environment. They should provide play types that are typically more available in rural environments. Other playgrounds are typically very static, whereas adventure playgrounds contain loose parts that allow children to create the park and structure play however they deem fit.

Adventure playgrounds have many benefits. Because of their unmanicured nature they can occupy left over spaces, such as vacant lots, and in some cases this may be more desirable from the child's point of view as long as the place is secure. They can be supplied with materials at little cost because discarded building materials, old cars or tires that might otherwise go to the dump can be used and will be put to good use by children. The opportunity to negotiate how these materials will be used with other children is important for building relationships and development. Given the large amount of structured activity in children's lives, adventure playgrounds would be a valuable counterpoint.

In the United States adventure playgrounds are rare and often less elaborate than their European counterparts. They have not caught on in the states because of aesthetic, funding and liability issues. Adventure playgrounds do require an adult supervisor. Linking them with other community services, however, might make it more feasible.

One adventure park in Berlin, called Kolle 37, combines a community center with an adventure playground and many other ecological projects. The playground is based on the principles of understanding fire, water, earth and air. The site includes an ecological garden and the community building incorporates green features such as stormwater and energy management. By linking the playground with a community center that provides many other services, such as music and crafts, a staff of six is possible and fundraising and community organizing is more feasible.

**Ecological Potential:** Reuse discarded materials. Environmental education. Urban agriculture. Water management.



source: <http://www.cps.k12.il.us/>



image sources: [http://www.pbcchicago.com/subhtml/press/pr\\_funston.asp](http://www.pbcchicago.com/subhtml/press/pr_funston.asp)



Kolle 37 allows all kinds of play from mud pits to animal farms. The community center provides a place to clean up. (Photos: Kolle37).



***“Fire and water - two of the basic elements of the earth and two that are so attractive and fascinating to humans. Access to both are symbols of luxury in modern adult life, yet both are almost totally absent in children’s play. Why?” -Barbara Hendricks***



In Roubaix, France sidewalks and building setback were used to generate play areas (Photo: Rouard/Simon).



Play space, basketball courts and a greenway link are provided under the Cambie Bridge on the Vancouver Waterfront (Photo: Nathan Brightbill).

## TEMPORAL PLAYGROUNDS AND LEFT OVER SPACES

Development in the urban environment can leave left over places that can serve as play areas in the short term or be appropriate long term. Large parcels do not necessarily have to be used for play areas. Taking advantage of left over spaces and spaces in transition can promote urban density and create unlikely and interesting play opportunities. These spaces may change in the future, but in the meantime can serve a valuable purpose. Large sidewalks, vacant lots and spaces created by roads can be used to add play materials.

In Roubaix France all of the sidewalks on the south side of the street were widened from 4 to 10 meters and recreated as play spaces. The space created by setbacks can also be used.

In Seattle (University Bridge Wall of Death), Portland (Burnside Bridge Skate Park) and Vancouver (Cambie Bridge playground and greenway) space underneath bridges has become covered gathering and play space.

From time to time places normally used for something else can be appropriated as play spaces temporarily, for example denoting a play street for a day or holding an event in a parking lot. Play space can also be mobile as well. In Germany, old buses have been converted into various kinds of play buses, such as a water play bus made from a fire truck that travels from neighborhood to neighborhood and turns ordinary places in play spaces for a day.

**Ecological Potential:** Put vacant land to use and promote urban density. Generate connections between divided places, such as under freeways.

## WATERPARKS

Water holds a fascination for most people, particularly children. Waterparks provide a safer means for children to physically interact with their environment. Waterparks are more frequent in the United States, because they have a greater element of safety and tend to be cleaner. They typically occur on paved surfaces, though; combining them with dirt would likely be more desirable to children.

Barbara Hendricks notes that allowing children to explore their fascination with elements like fire and water helps them better understand the dangers of them. She believes that under supervision these elements should be available in every play area (see also Adventure Playgrounds). At a minimum, however, waterparks allow contact with water and do not necessarily need to be supervised. These parks should contain sprays, shallow streams and fountains.



Ira Keller Fountain in Portland is exciting for children. Because of its high walls, children are cautious and learn boundaries. (Photo: <http://www.scenefrommylife.com/archive/2005/0718.html>).



Water parks can be very simple. This one at the Farmer’s Market in Davis, CA provides simple jets of water for children to interact with. (Photo: City of Davis).



Emery Barnes park in Vancouver is a more formal space serving as a promenade for adults, but still provides interest and challenge for children. (Photo: Nathan Brightbill)

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### Carkeek Park

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### Acquisition

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PPS Funding: [http://www.pps.org/upo/info/funding/?referrer=upo\\_contents](http://www.pps.org/upo/info/funding/?referrer=upo_contents)  
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